

II. Listing of Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) A coupling system for a medical dissection tool, the coupling system configured to interconnect a power source to a dissection tool, the coupling system comprising:

a coupling shaft having a proximal portion for receiving power from the power source, a distal portion and a longitudinal axis, said distal portion having an external surface and defining an internal passage adapted for receiving a portion of the medical dissection tool, and at least one aperture extending from said external surface to said internal passage; and

at least one locking member positioned adjacent said at least one aperture and movable with respect to the coupling shaft through a first path in a direction at least partially parallel to said longitudinal axis into a locked position to prevent the medical dissection tool from moving along the longitudinal axis of the internal passage.

2. (Currently Amended) The coupling system of claim 1 wherein the first path is created by moving the at least one locking member through the aperture toward the tool shaft and in a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis, wherein the aperture has a length extending substantially along the longitudinal axis and a width substantially transverse to the longitudinal axis, the length being greater than the width.

3. (Original) The coupling system of claim 1 wherein the first path extends at an angle of approximately 45° to the longitudinal axis.

4. (Original) The coupling system of claim 1 wherein the at least one locking member comprises a spherical ball.

5. (Original) The coupling system of claim 1 wherein the at least one locking member comprises three locking members.

6. (Previously Presented) The coupling system of claim 1 wherein the at least one locking member comprises three spherical balls.
7. (Original) The coupling system of claim 1, wherein said proximal portion and said distal portion are integrally formed on a single shaft.
8. (Original) The coupling system of claim 1 further comprising an engagement sleeve disposed adjacent said distal portion, said engagement sleeve having an internal contact surface configured for engaging the at least one locking member into a locked position through the first path.
9. (Previously Presented) The coupling system of claim 1, wherein the dissection tool includes a proximal end and said internal passage includes an internal shoulder, said at least one locking member urging said dissection tool proximal end against said internal shoulder when in said locked position.
10. (Original) The coupling system of claim 8, further including a biasing member urging said engagement sleeve to contact said at least one locking member to move to said locked position.
11. (Original) The coupling system of claim 1 wherein the at least one locking member moves through a second path into an unlocked position.
12. (Previously Presented) The coupling system of claim 1 further comprising an engagement shaft wherein at least one opening in the engagement shaft holds the at least one locking member.
13. (Original) The coupling system of claim 1 further comprising a retention member residing inside the internal passage wherein the retention member is configured to couple with one end of the medical dissection tool.
- 14-21. (Canceled)

22. (Previously Presented) A coupling assembly for joining a power source to a medical dissection tool having a longitudinal axis, the coupling assembly comprising:

a coupling housing having a proximal portion configured to receive power from the power source and a distal portion configured to receive a portion of the dissection tool; and

a means for locking the dissection tool to the coupling housing configured to move the dissection tool within the coupling housing along the longitudinal axis, wherein said means for locking is at least partially moveable along the longitudinal axis with respect to the coupling housing.

23. (Original) The coupling assembly of claim 22, wherein said coupling housing includes an internal bore configured to receive the dissection tool, and the internal bore includes an internal shoulder, said means for locking configured to move the dissection tool into abutting engagement with said internal shoulder in a locked position.

24. (New) A coupling system for connecting a power source to a medical dissection tool, the coupling system comprising:

a coupling shaft having a proximal portion, an opposing distal portion, and a longitudinal axis extending therebetween, wherein a section of the distal portion comprises an external surface and an internal surface, the internal surface defining an internal passage for receiving a portion of the medical dissection tool,

the coupling shaft further comprising a first aperture extending from the external surface to the internal surface, the first aperture having a first length extending substantially along the longitudinal axis and a first width extending substantially transverse to the longitudinal axis, the first length being greater than the first width such that the first aperture is elongated along the longitudinal axis; and

a first locking member positioned at least partially within the first aperture and movable along the longitudinal axis with respect to the coupling shaft from an unlocked positioned to a locked position to secure the medical dissection tool within the internal passage.

25. (New) The coupling system of claim 24 wherein the first aperture defines a proximal wall portion and a distal wall portion separated by substantially the length of the aperture along the longitudinal axis, the first locking member being spaced from the proximal wall portion in the unlocked position and spaced from the distal wall portion in the locked position.

26. (New) The coupling system of claim 25 wherein the first locking member is positioned adjacent to the distal wall portion in the unlocked position and adjacent to the proximal wall portion in the locked position.

27. (New) The coupling system of claim 24 wherein the first locking member comprises a spherical ball.

28. (New) The coupling system of claim 24, wherein the coupling shaft further comprises:
a second aperture extending from the external surface to the internal surface, the second aperture having a second length extending substantially along the longitudinal axis and a second width extending substantially transverse to the longitudinal axis, the second length being greater than the second width such that the second aperture is elongated along the longitudinal axis;
a third aperture extending from the external surface to the internal surface, the third aperture having a third length extending substantially along the longitudinal axis and a third width extending substantially transverse to the longitudinal axis, the third length being greater than the third width such that the third aperture is elongated along the longitudinal axis;
wherein the first, second, and third apertures are equally spaced about a circumference of the coupling shaft.

29. (New) The coupling system of claim 28 further comprising:
a second locking member positioned at least partially within the second aperture and movable along the longitudinal axis with respect to the coupling shaft from an unlocked

positioned to a locked position to secure the medical dissection tool within the internal passage;
and

a third locking member positioned at least partially within the third aperture and movable along the longitudinal axis with respect to the coupling shaft from an unlocked positioned to a locked position to secure the medical dissection tool within the internal passage;

wherein the first, second, and third locking members comprise spherical balls.

30. (New) The coupling system of claim 24 further comprising an engagement sleeve movably engaged with the coupling shaft, the engagement sleeve having a tapered internal contact surface for moving the first locking member along the longitudinal axis with respect to the coupling shaft from the unlocked positioned to the locked position.

31. (New) The coupling system of claim 24 wherein the first locking member is moveable at approximately a 45° angle relative to the longitudinal axis from the unlocked position to the locked position.